



MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Prosperity Plan Steering Committee
From: Eliot Rose and James Choe, ICF International
Date: March 5, 2015
Re: Regional Prosperity Plan Evaluation: Summary of Key Findings

Key findings

Process: Successes

Participants feel very positive about the RPP process and leadership structure. Over 70 percent of respondents agreed that the RPP was more inclusive, more transparent, more open to feedback, and more representative of varying perspectives than other funding processes, and participants

The RPP engaged a number of organizations that don't normally participate in regional planning. 44 percent of survey respondents indicated that they expect to have higher involvement in regional planning efforts in the future than they did before being involved in the RPP.

The RPP fostered constructive dialogue among working group participants who came from a variety of different background and perspectives. The peer leadership structure of the RPP allowed working groups to freely discuss contentious issues and fund projects that might not normally have gotten public agency or foundation funding.

Integrating equity into planning processes is a key issue facing the Bay Area, and one where the RPP is likely to contribute to success. Half of the survey respondents rate integrating equity as one of the three most important RPP objectives, and over a third feel that the RPP is likely to achieve success in this area.

Process: Challenges

The RPP was not as successful in engaging local governments and the business community as it was at engaging non-profits. The majority of survey respondents were from the non-profit sector, and many interviewees cited a perception among public agencies and the private sector that the process was unbalanced. Some felt that this lack of balance drew negative attention to the RPP or made it challenging to implement.

Many stakeholders had limited capacity to participate in the RPP. 46 percent of survey respondents said that a lack of capacity prevented their organizations from sending someone to meetings, and many interviewees described stakeholders who scaled back their participation due to lack of ongoing capacity.

Stakeholders found the RPP process to be complex and burdensome. Many stakeholders remarked that it was challenging to keep track of and coordinate among all the working groups and projects. Some grantees commented that the invoicing and reporting requirements were unusually challenging, and suggested either providing clearer guidance or reducing requirements.

Partnerships: Successes

The RPP created a wealth of new partnerships, including many that broke down silos. 37 percent of survey respondents expect to increase collaboration with other organizations, and 29% of respondents plan on collaborating more frequently with organizations outside of their own sector.

Partnerships: Challenges

The Steering Committee and Equity Collaborative did not always live up to their full potential as collaborative bodies. Several interviewees suggested that the elected officials on the Steering Committee could have been engaged more proactively, and Equity Collaborative members say that the Collaborative did not draw engagement from members of the other working groups.

Projects: Successes

Many of the Bay Area's high-need communities were well served by RPP projects, including communities of concern in Concord, Antioch, the inner East Bay, southwestern Alameda County, eastern San Mateo County, and San Francisco.

Stakeholders feel that RPP projects were largely successful. Most co-chairs felt that projects were advancing the goals of their working groups, and all sub-grantees surveyed felt that their projects had met with at least some success in achieving the relevant objectives. The varied sub-grant projects make up a toolbox that implementing agencies can draw upon to address issues related to housing affordability and access to jobs among low-income workers.

Projects: Challenges

The large and diverse set of projects funded by the RPP may make implementation more challenging. The public agencies who are largely responsible for next steps may not have the capacity to sort through the many approaches in the toolbox of RPP projects, and the wide variety of smaller sub-grant projects means that any individual project has fewer resources to carry work forward.

High-need communities in the North Bay and Solano County were not as well served by RPP projects. Organizational capacity to address the issues that are of concern to the RPP is concentrated in San Francisco and the inner East Bay, and communities of concern in the North Bay were not as well served by RPP projects. There were no RPP sub-grant projects that targeted Solano County.

Summary

Many of successes and challenges discussed above are opposite sides of the same coin, and the decisions that made the RPP's process successful also pose challenges to implementation.

Decision	Impact on process	Implications for implementation
Focus on bringing new stakeholders to the table	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New participants in regional planning• New partnerships among non-profits/CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of capacity to continue work• Perceived bias causes public and private implementation agents to lean out
More projects, smaller grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovative, diverse projects that create a toolkit to draw from• More organizations receive funding, more partners participate• Local projects that are tailored to different community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult for outsiders to ID best practices and next steps• Fewer resources for any given project to continue the work• Lack of clarity about how projects add up to a regional approach